

or intercolumniations; and these spaces are filled with paintings or sculpture, generally representing the life of the Virgin, or of the Saviour, or subjects taken from the Bible, and not unfrequently from the local legends and tutelars: these are the books of those who can see, but cannot read. Spaniards, in designating the right and left of the altar, generally use the terms *lado del Evangelio*, *lado de la Epistola*: the Gospel side, that is the right, looking from the altar; the Epistle side, that is the left.

Architecture, after the erection of the Ecce-ri-ol, declined in Spain under the baneful influences of caprice and imitative adornment. Old buildings were disfigured or pulled down to make room for new abominations; and what Charles V. said to a prelate at Cordova in 1523, would have equally applied elsewhere: "You have built here," exclaimed he, "what you, or any one, might have built anywhere else; but you have destroyed what was unique in the world. You have pulled down what was complete, and you have begun what you cannot finish."

ON LINEAL EXPRESSION AND ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN.*

It is presumed that the best points of each character, the grand and the picturesque, may be joined to their mutual advantage, and form a more agreeable novelty. Though bearing less undivided application to our purpose, let us commence with the art of painting, and turn to a great authority, Sir J. Reynolds, who, with one or two strange contradictions to his own words, speaks thus:—

"Such as suppose that the great style might happily be blended with the ornamental; that the simple, grave, and majestic dignity of Raffaele could unite with the glow and bustle of a Paolo or a Tintoret, are entirely mistaken. The principles by which each are attained are so contrary to each other, that they seem, in my opinion, incompatible, and as impossible to exist together as that in the mind the most sublime ideas and the lowest sensuality should at the same time be united."

Instead of "impossible" it would be better to say "disagreeable," for such monstrosities have existed. Of Rubens he says:—

"The whole is so much of a piece, that one can scarce be brought to believe, that if any of the qualities he possessed had been more correct and perfect, his works would have been so complete as they now appear."

Again, of Poussin, in comparison with Rubens:—

"However opposite their characters, in one thing they agreed, both of them always preserving a perfect correspondence between all the parts of their respective manners, inasmuch that it may be doubted, whether any alteration of what is considered as defective in either would not destroy the whole effect."

But, without speaking of what might or might not be, let us turn to cases where this amalgamation has been tried.

Tintoretto professed to join the colouring of Titian and the drawing of M. Angelo: here, one would say, if such an amalgamation to the benefit of each were possible, it would succeed, for the character of the colouring was separated by no very startling grade from the character of the drawing and the man himself who proposed to obtain this end—a true genius. Now, what is the result? Why, that he is honoured, and we delighted, not by his success in joining imitations of both, as he often does most ably, but in so far as his own strong and individual character is marked upon the canvases.

Carlo Maratti, according to Reynolds, "knew and practised all the rules of art, and from a composition of Raffaele, Caracci, and Guido, made up a style, of which the only fault was, that it had no manifest defects and no striking beauties, and that the principles of his composition are never blended together, so as to form one uniform body, original in its kind, or excellent in any view."

Here we have a man of genius, and a man

of comparatively, if not merely, mechanical power, trying this system of the amalgamation of excellences for the production of an equal or superior excellence.

In each case the result is a failure. Further, if the principle were correct, we might justly say, that Rembrandt being the most perfect master of light and shade, let us give him Raffaele's perfection of form, and they would mutually enhance each other's charm; but a moment's thought of cases where this has been attempted, assures us that they do, on the contrary, mutually deteriorate each other. Make up a landscape from the calm beauty of Claude, the massive grandeur of Poussin, and the dotty picturesqueness of some of our modern schools, and mutual detriment would assuredly result. Fuseli, in his endeavour to unite grace and grandeur in his women, produces on me at least a most disagreeable impression. Michelangelo never attempted this: it is scarcely too much to say, that his celebrated female figures in "Night" and "Morning" are devoid of all grace or beauty, except that which the necessary form of humanity involves.

As for ornament, he who should wish the minute finishing, or the quantity of ornamental subjects, in most Dutch pieces, or the early Italian school—in the works of a Fra Bartolomeo, a Volterra, or a Reynolds—must be destitute of all perception of fitness.

We cannot bring these three distinct characters together for the production of an equal, or superior character—they must detract from each other. This is, perhaps, not so evident in painting, because there are so many other adjuncts to attract the attention; but even from these instances I think we are justified in arriving at the conclusion that form, light and shade, and ornament, have each individually the qualities of grandeur, beauty, and picturesqueness, and that when the form is picturesque, the shadow and ornament should be likewise picturesque, and that the same system should be carried out through whatever character, simple or compound, is meant to be expressed; and that to make the form well defined and graceful, the shadow undefined and picturesque, and the ornament massive and grotesque, would be to produce an eccentric, but surely not a good effect.

Now, let us turn to sculpture, and here we must, in mere fairness, make another extract from Reynolds:—"The highest perfection of the human form is not to be found," he says, "in the Hercules, nor the gladiator, nor in the Apollo, but in that form which is taken from all, and which partakes equally of the activity of the gladiator, of the delicacy of the Apollo, and of the muscular strength of the Hercules. For perfect beauty in any species must combine all the characters which are beautiful in that species—it cannot consist in any one to the exclusion of the rest. No one, therefore, must be predominant, that no one may be deficient."

This idea of a central form, from which all "deviation is deformity," consisting in the combination of distinct qualities or characters, and exhibiting each in perfection, is one of those loose and obstructive fancies, grounded on no reasonable principles nor on any analogous facts, which serve only to puzzle and confuse us. Let us look around, and first let us take the forms of trees. An artist may make an ideal pine tree from many well-selected models, more perfect in its special character than any we have seen; he may do the same with the poplar, the oak, the willow, the yew, but would any one allow or conceive that there is a central form of a tree, more perfect than any existing, gained by blending the respective excellences of each?

If we take animated nature, it may be allowed that an artist might make a lion more noble than any that ever existed—a horse more beautiful—a gazelle more graceful—a goat more picturesque—but could any art make out of these a central perfect and supreme form, expressing their perfect variety in one perfect unity? Would one not produce rather the horrible jumble of a distorted dream?

It may be urged that I am enlarging the sphere of operation, and altering the meaning of the proposition; but let us take the words as they stand: "Perfect beauty in a species must combine all the characters of that species; it cannot consist of any one to the exclusion of

the rest. No one, therefore, must be predominant, that no one may be deficient." The sphere of my illustration has certainly been enlarged, but the sense and spirit of the reasoning remain the same, viz., that opposite or various qualities must be joined for the formation of actual perfection; for the Hercules, the gladiator, and the Apollo are as much distinct species of one form, man, though it may require a more delicate sense to perceive it, as the European, the Asiatic, and the Negrin of the same form; the oak, the elm, the aspen, of the tree; or the mule, the zebra, and the ass, are of the horse. Their characters are essentially distinct, and yet resolvable into one pervading form. And if it be true, that no perfect beauty can exist which does not include all the characters which are beautiful in a species, then even binding ourselves down to this word beautiful, which is most indefinitely used, is wrong, for surely the Hercules would not be characterised as beautiful,—we must join the Asiatic to the European, the zebra to the horse, and the aspen to the elm, to the improvement of each.

Now, without further simile, it seems clear to me, from the former investigations, that qualities strongly marked and perfect or excellent in themselves when amalgamated, do not aid or improve, but do actually neutralize and even destroy the charm of each. Let us take it in a common-sense view, and is it not a paradox to assert that perfect beauty is not in the Hercules, the gladiator, or the Apollo alone, but in that form which partakes of the muscular strength, of the activity, of the delicacy of each? That which renders them separately so good is the perfect development of each quality singly; and is it not clear that by blending them in the only way Reynolds can mean throughout the whole man, they at once lose those characteristics perfectly developed in their respective forms, and become imperfectly developed in a compound form? All compound qualities are more or less inconsistent, and all single qualities, though made up of an infinite variety of forms, are consistent. The expression of character, and not the expression of beauty only, is what delights us in form as in every thing else; and in so much as any expression is perfect, in so much any admixture of another expression detracts from its supreme merit and the pleasure it affords us. Moreover, this principle of fusion, which Sir Joshua considers would be the perfection of ideal humanity, has been carried out in varied degrees, more gradually and artistically by the Greeks, and more coarsely by the Romans, who, in one case, that of combining manly beauty and delicacy or grace, have produced those effeminately graceful statues which are to be met with so constantly in the Italian galleries, and are more disagreeable than the representations of a consistent deformity. These assertions of Reynolds are diametrically opposed: the style he speaks of in painting are merely species or characters of that mode of expression; and it seems to me that the two former are founded on fact and observation on truth, whilst this latter is founded on no fact, truth, or reason. The concluding remark especially confutes itself, for where no character is predominant, even though none may be deficient, no character exists: this is inconceivable, and produces on the mind the idea of non-entity. Surely it was not from precedent or example that this is predicated as the perfection of form, for there is no one celebrated work of sculpture or of any other art but what has some predominant character by which we distinguish it. And it is just the predominant character of each statue he has named which distinguishes it as excellent over all its rivals.

Architecture, I think, shows the stubbornness and incongruity of strongly marked qualities more clearly than the other arts, there being less to confuse the ideas with than in sculpture or painting, and it exhibits better the gradual, almost imperceptible, differences by which alone they are made to harmonise, and their antagonism is rendered less palpable. It must be premised that as art, like civilisation, admits of no chronologically continuous development, but shows various phases in various and unconnected periods; in filling up and explaining the necessary gradations of a particular class or style of building, we must be prepared to put chronological order out of our minds, as one, for instance, would be forced to

* See page 330, ante.